



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913
PH (517) 373.0793 | FAX (517) 373.5607
www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/george/

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 17, 2004

CONTACT: Sherry Sofia
517-373-0793

Senate Transportation Committee passes bill commemorating Underground Railroad

Lansing – The Senate Committee on Transportation today passed Senate Bill 241, commemorating Southwest Michigan’s historic role in the Underground Railroad.

“As many as 50,000 slaves escaped to freedom through Michigan and many of them through Kalamazoo and Calhoun counties,” said Sen. Tom George, R-Texas Twp. “The works of people like Dr. Nathan Thomas and Erastus Hussey, local ‘stationmasters’ on the Underground Railroad, should not be forgotten.”

SB 241 would name a section of US-131 as the “Underground Railroad Memorial Highway.” The section runs from U Avenue to West XY Avenue in Kalamazoo County. The bill also designates I-94 from Exit 98 to Exit 110 in Calhoun County. These sections of US-131 and I-94 were chosen because they closely follow a portion of the “Quaker” or “Old Territorial Road” route, one of the most active and well-documented Underground Railroad routes in Michigan.

“We have been actively working to demonstrate our pride in our community’s history,” said Darrell Harden, Schoolcraft village manager. “Our participation in the Underground Railroad is the brightest point in that history.”

“The designation of this highway is not just the giving of a name to a road,” George said. “It reminds us of Michigan’s involvement in the Underground Railroad, our anti-slavery heritage and our involvement in the Civil War. It is a part of our history — a part of our culture that should be celebrated.”

###